Approved for Release: 2020/04/21 C06841336

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

This material contains information affecting the National Defense of the United States within the meaning of the Espionage Laws, Title 18, U.S.C. Secs. 793 and 794, the transmission or revelation of which in any manner to an unauthorized person is prohibited by law.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

COUNTRY Cuba

REPORT NO. OO-B 3,170,12

SUBJECT Construction of "Tourist Center" on Cayo Largo Rumored to be Related to Either Submarine or Missile Activity

DATE DISTR. 31 October 1960

NO. PAGES 2

REFERENCES CD/OO Case 33369

DATE OF INFO. To mid-Aug 60

PLACE & DATE ACQ. Throughout Cuba; To mid-Aug 60

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

SOURCE US national; former non-commissioned officer in the US Marine Corps.

Source is a 23 year old ex-Marine who spent the period from February 1959 through July 1960 serving in the Cuban Army and the Cuban Air Force. He obtained his discharge from the Cuban Air Force in June 1960 and returned to the US via Mexico City on 30 Aug 60. According to source, he had been nominated by the Marine Corps to enroll in the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps at a US university, even though he had not finished his high school education. He reportedly did not accept this offer because he was much more interested in Special Forces type activity, and this led to his decision to leave the Marine Corps and a short time later to enlist in the Cuban Army. He appears to be a keen observer. While source's plans are indefinite, he should be available for further interview during the next few weeks (mid-October-November 1960).

1. During the period February-December 1959 I served as a Sergeant in the Paratroop Regiment of the Cuban Army. We were stationed at San Antonio de los Baños Air Force Base until May 1959, at which time the Regiment was moved to a bivouac area near San José de las Lajas, a small town about 35 miles southeast of Havana on the central highway. In December 1959 I transferred to the Cuban Air Force and was stationed at San Julián Air Force Base (inactive) in Pinar del Río Province. I handled most of the training for the Paratroop Regiment at San Antonio de los Baños in addition to acting as platoon sergeant for one of the units. In these capacities I got to know many of the men in the Regiment quite well.

2. A number of my paratroopers (about 15) were sent to Cayo Largo, the easternmost large island of the Archipielago de los Canarreos, to set up what was officially referred to as a "tourist area." This was in early October 1959. When the Paratroop Regiment was disbanded in January 1960, an additional 50 paratroopers were sent to Cayo Largo to work on this project. I do not know how many other soldiers were engaged in construction projects on the island.

3. Cayo Largo is an extremely unlikely spot to build a tourist center. The island is extremely remote and is serviced from the port of Cienfuegos and the Naval facility on the Isla de Pinos. The mainland adjacent to Cayo Largo is sparsely populated and it would appear quite unlikely that Cubans from Havana would flock to this remote area. The island is about 11 miles by four miles, with a perfect bathing beach and few hills. Vegetation is sparse.

4. Cayo Largo could be used as a base of operations for submarines or as a missile site. Rumors about both of these plans were circulating throughout the armed forces of Cuba, but I can neither confirm nor deny them. S-E-C-R-E-T

STATE	ARMY	X	NAVY		AIR		FBI		AEC					

E.O. 1530

NO DISSEM ABROAD

Dissemination limited to full-time employees of CIA, AEC and FBI; and, within State and Defense, to the intelligence components, including IRR elements, and higher echelons with their immediate supporting staffs. Not to be disseminated to consultants, [illegible] personnel on short term active duty (excepting) individuals who are normally full-time employees of CIA, AEC, FBI, State or Defense, [illegible] without permission of the originating office has been obtained through the Assistant Director for Central Reference, CIA.

FILED

~~SECRET~~

Approved for Release: 2020/04/21 C06841336

Approved for Release: 2020/04/21 C06841336

4. I talked to a few of my ex-paratroopers in April 1960 about their work on this island, and they told me they were building a two-lane gravel road the length of the island and that construction of numerous cabins was under way.

5. I again checked with an ex-paratrooper just prior to my departure from Havana in mid-August 1960. He had returned from Cayo Largo a few days before, and he reported that the cabins had been completed. He stated that Cuban Army personnel had constructed a number of small groups of cabins, each group containing 25 to 30 cabins. Some of the large cabins reportedly would hold up to 30 men using barracks type accommodations, and the majority of cabins held about 10 men each. The groups reportedly were located at various points on Cayo Largo, some in the central sector and others on the beach.

6. Cayo Largo would be an excellent spot for a secret submarine base or missile site, since it is surrounded by a number of small islands which could be easily protected and patrolled. Deep water exists on the south side of the island, and I believe there is a primitive landing area on the south beach. I have viewed the island from the air but have not set foot on it, therefore my knowledge of details is not great. In mid-1960 the Cuban soldiers were clearing an area for what appeared to be a light aircraft strip.

7. I do not recall any other rumors concerning the location of either submarine or missile bases in Cuba up to the time of my departure in mid-August 1960.

- end -

Approved for Release: 2020/04/21 C06841336